the year 1993-94 to 45.2 per cent in the year 1998-99, while the contribution of the agricultural sector has declined from 31 percent to 29.1 percent and that of industrial sector has declined from 26.3 percent to 25.7 percent during the same period.

(c) and (d) No conclusion can be drawn regarding the gap between rich and poor on the basis of the changes in sectoral share of GDP.

Guidelines on National Long Distance Policy

602. DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Planning Commission has given its set of guidelines to the Ministry of Communications before it announces a National Long Distance Policy for opening up long distance calls for private competition;

(b) if so, what are these guidelines; and

(c) what is the Ministry's reaction to the recommendations of the Planning Commission?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) In the draft Chapter on Telecommunications of the Ninth Plan Mid Term Review, the Planning Commission has, *inter-alia*, made certain observations on policy issues regarding opening of long distance services for competition. The draft Chapter has been sent for the comments of the Ministry before it is finally approved.

(b) The observations made by Commission in this regard are:

(i) Free and full competition should be ensured from the beginning. It has to be ensured that no artificial barriers like

competitive bidding based on minimum reserve price and restricting the number of players initially are imposed.

(ii) No entry restrictions except the one-time entry fee and financial soundness and credit worthiness of the operators should be imposed. The quantum of entry fee could be increased appropriately if the one recommended by TRAI is considered inadequate to keep the non-serious players out.

(iii) Intra-circle long distance traffic has to be permitted to ensure freedom of choice of long distance operator to the subscriber. The artificial distinction between intra-circle and inter-circle long distance connectivity would become redundant in the face of emerging technological innovations. Un-restricted competition among the ISPs has already demonstrated the virtue of this approach to rapidly expand the customer base and reduce cost to the customer at the intra-circle level and the Internet telephony, underlining the need to have free competition at the Intra-circle level.

(c) The comments from the Ministry of Communications are yet to received.

Opening of Integrated Infrastructure Development Centres

603. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES AND AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating to open some Integrated Infrastructure Development Centres in the country;

(b) if so, the different facilities given by the proposed centres;

(c) the number of centres to be opened specially for the North-Eastern States; and

(d) the amount required for each project and present progress of the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES AND AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The objective of the Integrated Infrastructural Development